

What Works Clearinghouse



English Language Learners

December 2009

Accelerated Reader

Effectiveness¹

No studies of *Accelerated Reader* that fall within the scope of the English Language Learners (ELL) review protocol meet What Works Clearinghouse (WWC) evidence standards. The lack of studies meeting WWC evidence standards means that, at this time, the WWC is unable to draw any conclusions based on research about the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of *Accelerated Reader* on ELL.

Program Description²

Accelerated Reader is a computer-based reading management system designed to complement an existing classroom literacy program for grades pre-K–12. It is designed to increase the amount of time students spend reading independently. Students choose reading-level appropriate books or short stories for which *Accelerated Reader* tests are available and read at their

own pace. Once students finish reading a book or short story, they take a multiple choice quiz that measures their reading performance and vocabulary growth. The computer-based management system provides students with immediate feedback on their performance and keeps records to help teachers and parents track students' attempts to reach their goals.

The WWC identified 13 studies of *Accelerated Reader* for English Language Learners that were published or released between 1983 and 2008.

Two studies are within the scope of the ELL review protocol but do not meet WWC evidence standards. In both studies, the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention because there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.

One study is out of the scope of the ELL review protocol because it does not include a sample within the age or grade range specified in the protocol.

Ten studies are out of the scope of the ELL review protocol because they have an ineligible study design; they do not include a comparison group.

1. The studies in this report were reviewed using WWC Evidence Standards, Version 2.0 (see the WWC Procedures and Standards Handbook, Chapter III).
2. The descriptive information for this program was obtained from publicly available sources: the program's website (www.renlearn.com/ar, downloaded August 2009) and the Florida Center for Reading Research website (www.fcrr.org, downloaded August 2009). The WWC requests developers to review the program description sections for accuracy from their perspective. Further verification of the accuracy of the descriptive information for this program is beyond the scope of this review.

References

Studies that fall outside the ELL review protocol or do not meet evidence standards

- Belgarde, K. A. (1999). *Accelerated Reader motivates English as a second language students to read*. Unpublished master's dissertation, Moorhead State University, MN.³ The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Castillo, D. V. (2002). *The effect of Accelerated Reader on the reading comprehension of third-grade students*. (Master's dissertation, California State University, 2002). *Master's Abstracts International*, 40(05), 34–1114. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- Knapik, P. J. (2002). *The effect of the Accelerated Reader program on student achievement: A comparison study*. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 2002). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 64(06A), 296–2027. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.
- Kortz, W. J. (2002). *Measuring the effects of the Accelerated Reader program on the third grade English language learners' reading achievement in dual language programs*. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Sam Houston State University, Huntsville, TX. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.
- McDurmon, A. (2001). *The effects of guided and repeated reading on English language learners*. Wisconsin Rapids, WI: Renaissance Learning. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a sample within the age or grade range specified in the protocol.
- McGlinn, J., & Parrish, A. (2002). Accelerating ESL students' reading progress with *Accelerated Reader*. *Reading Horizons*,

42(3), 175–189. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Michalik, C. (2002). *The Accelerated Reader program and reading achievement in sixth grade students*. Unpublished master's dissertation, Concordia University, River Forest, IL. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Nelson, D. M. (2006). *English language learners (ELLs) pre-viewing literature on digital curriculum to improve reading comprehension and motivation on accelerated reader tests*. Unpublished master's thesis, Hamline University, St. Paul, MN. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Renaissance Learning. (2000). *Chicago inner-city school raises test scores significantly*. Retrieved from <http://research.renlearn.com/research/pdfs/67.pdf>. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Renaissance Learning. (2004). *California school shows growth on API four years in a row*. Retrieved from <http://research.renlearn.com/research/pdfs/184.pdf>. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Renaissance Learning. (2007). *Reading more and monitoring progress spell success for Texas elementary school*. Retrieved from <http://research.renlearn.com/research/pdfs/251.pdf>. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

Rodriguez-Blanco, O. (2006). *The impact of the Accelerated Reader program on third grade/fourth grade bilingual students' TAKS reading scores in a south Texas border town*. (Doctoral dissertation, Texas A&M University, 2006). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68(01A), 95–58. The study is ineligible for review because it does not use a comparison group.

3. In 2000, the name of the university changed to Minnesota State University-Moorhead.

References (continued)

- Yee, V. N. (2007). An evaluation of the impact of a standards-based intervention on the academic achievement of English language learners. (Doctoral dissertation, University of Southern California, 2007). *Dissertation Abstracts International*, 68(04A), 108–1317. The study does not meet WWC evidence standards because the measures of effectiveness cannot be attributed solely to the intervention—there was only one unit assigned to one or both conditions.